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SUBJECT: BAN KI-MOON BRIEFS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON PAKISTAN,
SRI LANKA, DISARMAMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE

¶1. (SBU) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the General Assembly during a June 1 briefing on his recent travels, that he was considering appointing a senior-level envoy to coordinate delivery of humanitarian assistance to the 2.4 million people who have been displaced in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. The SYG categorically dismissed media reports that the UN had underreported the number of casualties from the conflict in Sri Lanka. He said he had encouraged the Sri Lankan government to consider calls for an investigation into civilian casualties, but that further UN engagement in an inquiry would need to follow a decision of the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly or another body. Ban said he was reconsidering an earlier decision to restructure the Department for Disarmament in light of recent rapprochement between Russia and the U.S. that had allowed the Disarmament Conference to adopt its first Program of Work in twelve years. Ban said he hoped the September 22, 2009 Climate Change Summit would not be a series of one-way interventions, but instead an "interactive Summit." He also said the WHO alert level would remain at "5" for the H1N1 virus, though he acknowledged H1N1's severity was currently not as acute as its scope and its spread. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) At a June 1 briefing for the General Assembly on his recent travels to Bahrain, Sri Lanka, Geneva, and Copenhagen, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was concerned about the "unfolding crisis" in Pakistan, in which over 2.4 million persons had been displaced from their homes due to fighting in the Swat Valley. Ban said the UN had received commitments for only about one-fifth of the 543 million dollars in assistance it had sought in a May 22 flash appeal and urged members to provide additional support. He said he was considering appointing a senior-level envoy to coordinate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

¶3. (SBU) Briefing on his recent visit to Sri Lanka, the SYG expressed "deep concern" about the high number of civilian casualties in the conflict. Both the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had violated the "inviolability of civilians," he said, but he "categorically denied" suggestions that the UN had deliberately underestimated the number of civilian casualties. Ban said he had urged government leaders to address the grievances of all communities and to find a lasting political solution that leads to reconciliation. He also said he had urged the government to accept calls for a fully accountable and transparent independent investigation of civilian casualties, but he stressed that the UN would not be involved in such an investigation unless called upon to do so by the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly or other competent UN body.

¶4. (SBU) Reporting on his recent trip to Geneva, the SYG said was pleased that the Conference on Disarmament had broken a

12 year impasse over the Program of Work. The rapprochement between the U.S. and Russia on disarmament had led him to reconsider his intention to restructure the Department of Disarmament and appoint a High Representative, he said. While he thought the role of a High Representative was important, he said it was "not as important as the political will of member states."

¶5. (SBU) The Secretary-General also said he was planning to make the September 22, 2009 Climate Change Summit "the most interactive meeting", rather than a typical Summit, which he described as a series of one-sided speeches by leaders interspersed with bilateral meetings. Instead Ban wanted the climate event to be a "multi-lane" program that would provide an opportunity to work out sticking points and facilitate negotiations among members. He said he planned to consult with members at both expert and Permrep levels in the course of planning the detailed framework for the Summit.

¶6. (SBU) Responding to questions about World Health Organization efforts on the H1N1 virus, Ban said that so far, 15500 cases of H1N1 had been identified, with 98 reported deaths. The WHO alert level would remain at "5" (pandemic level), he said, adding that there was a difference between the scope and spread of the pandemic and its severity. He acknowledged that WHO might be need to find a way to be more flexible and realistic in managing alert levels in cases where the severity does not match the spread and scope.
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